

My Work in the NASA Glenn History Office and Records Management Office

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This is my fourth summer working with my mentor, Kevin P. Coleman, who is the Center History Coordinator, Center Records Manager, and Center Forms Manager. I am working in the GRC History Office with some overlap in the Records Management Office. I have three major projects this summer. First, I am assisting in the documentation of historic facilities. Second, I am involved in a project to organize files and create an archives at Plum Brook Station. Third, I have helped the records management office with its inventory of stored records at Plum Brook. Also, I received an award this summer for research work I had done for NASA in the past.

First, my primary project is to help assemble documentation for historic facilities at Glenn. This is somewhat of an extension of my project from last summer. Last summer, I worked to compile a complete list of all of NASA's historic sites and landmarks (as designated by the National Park Service, as well as several private organizations) throughout the country. Then, I briefly researched the significance of historic designation under federal law. Finally, I put my findings into a report which was submitted to NASA Headquarters. Upon review by the NASA History Office and several center-level history officials, it was decided that NASA should work to update its documentation of its historic sites and landmarks since some of the documentation was outdated or unavailable. Until recently, many project managers and facility managers working at historic facilities were not even aware that their surroundings had been designated as historic under federal law (most specifically, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and its amendments). Therefore, they were unaware of the legal obligations for historic preservation.

This summer, my project is to research some of Glenn's historic sites and landmarks in more detail. The goal is to put together a template for documenting historic NASA facilities. The hope is that this template of requirements for historic documentation of facilities (which may include records, drawings, photos, film, interviews, and a Web site) can be used agency-wide to assist center history offices in documenting historic sites and landmarks. To this end, I am working with Bob Arrighi, an archivist from InDyne, Inc., and Anne Burke, a NASA co-op, to gather and assess the historic value of records from several facilities at Glenn and Plum Brook Station. We will also work to determine the costs of each part of the template.

This project began with a meeting between Kevin Coleman, Glenn's Chief Architect Joe Morris, Bob Arrighi, and me. Joe Morris indicated that in addition to Glenn's current historic sites and landmarks, a significant section of the Center may one day be nominated as a "historic district." This possibility is not without consequence, as it would mean that all the facilities within the historic district will automatically fall under the federal laws applying to the preservation and documentation of historic

buildings. My project, which includes research of some of the buildings within this potential historic district, will impact how smooth the transition to historic status will be.

Bob Arrighi and I started off by researching and documenting the history of Building 4, the Flight Research Building (also known as the Hangar). We have taken an inventory of the photos and drawings that have been stored in the Hangar's records room. Then, we interviewed the Chief of Aircraft Operations, William Rieke, to get a sense of the significant projects and accomplishments that had occurred at the Hangar. I have also reviewed flight log books going back as far as 1943 and documenting historic material. Soon, Bob Arrighi, Anne Burke, and I will begin setting up oral interviews with retirees who worked at the Hangar. From these interviews, we will attain a complete and accurate record of the many projects that went on at the Hangar.

Other buildings at Glenn which are scheduled to be documented as part of this project include the Altitude Wind Tunnel, the Zero Gravity Research Facility, Buildings 24 and 16, and Propulsion Systems Labs 1 & 2. Bob Arrighi, Anne Burke, and I will soon begin researching the historic sites and landmarks at Plum Brook Station. The facility at Plum Brook that will be the focus of our research is the Spacecraft Propulsion Facility (B-2). B-2 is the only National Historic Landmark located at Plum Brook Station. Although it is doubtful all of these facilities will be documented before my summer internship ends, these projects will be continued by the History Office after I am gone.

Second, I am also working with Bob Arrighi and Anne Burke on a project to inventory and organize the records of Plum Brook Station. Currently, the files in Plum Brook's engineering building are unorganized. This can have serious consequences, as important records cannot always be readily accessed by researchers, NASA officials, or historians. Our job is to organize Plum Brook's files according to facility and project, put them into a logical finding system, and create a sign-out procedure for people who wish to view the records. The records will then be appropriately stored in climate-controlled rooms in order to preserve their integrity. This endeavor will require us to make weekly trips to Plum Brook. Galen Wilson of the National Archives and Records Administration will be assisting us in the project by helping to identify historically significant records among the general facility and project records.

Third, I am assisting the Glenn Records Management Office in completing its inventory of records that are stored in the bunkers at Plum Brook Station. Over the course of this summer (and the past two summers), I have worked with Suzanne Kelley and Debbie Demaline of InDyne, Inc. to complete this inventory. As there are many bunkers at Plum Brook – each of which contains thousands of boxes of files – this is a huge undertaking. This inventory is important because it will ensure the integrity of Glenn's record-keeping process. We checked to make sure that all boxes that are listed as being in a specific location at Plum Brook are in their proper storage locations. In addition to being important so that records are easily retrievable, this inventory may also have great significance in the near future as Glenn looks at moving its records from Plum Brook to another location.

Another item of interest that did not comprise a huge amount of my time this summer – yet was still significant – was my mentor's coordination of the June 9 premiere/award ceremony for the book Taming Liquid Hydrogen: The Centaur Upper-Stage Rocket 1958-2002 by Dr. Virginia Dawson and Dr. Mark Bowles. My role in the logistics of the ceremony was small, and included helping with the decorations and with

people who required assistance in the parking lot. However, after the ceremony was over, I was presented with a special award from the History Office at NASA Headquarters for my work last summer on my research of NASA's historic sites and landmarks. The award was totally unexpected, but I was happy that I had been a small part of the extraordinary NASA History Office team that is working to preserve the history of America's space program.

In conclusion, my projects this summer will be significant to the History Office and the Records Management Office in the long term. The documentation of historic buildings – and in light of the potential historic district at Glenn – is important so that NASA can stay up to date with its historic preservation obligations. The project to organize Plum Brook's records will ensure that the records will be readily accessible. Also, the inventory of Glenn's records at Plum Brook will ensure the reliability of Glenn's record storage procedures. For all these reasons, I consider this summer at NASA Glenn to have been very productive.